

FLORA ZAMBESIACA

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Flora Zambesiaca deals with the flora of the countries "terrarum Zambesii aquis conjunctarum", approximately the basin of the Zambezi, comprising Zambia, Malawi, Mozambique, Botswana and Rhodesia and including for reasons of convenience the Caprivi Strip.

The project was started in 1955 by agreement between Portugal, the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, as it then was, and Great Britain represented at that time in the area by Bechuanaland Protectorate, now Botswana.

Flora Zambesiaca claims to be a complete flora in a sense which I will explain. I consider that a complete flora should give satisfactory information in 7 categories:

1. Keys to families, genera and species.
2. Latin names with author(s) place of publication and type.
3. Synonymy complete as regards the nomenclatural history of the species (the accepted name) and the main names which have been used in the past for it in the area concerned (but not necessarily a complete world synonymy).
4. Descriptions including at least the principal diagnostic features but not necessarily of monographic completeness.
5. Citation of representative specimens with the herbaria in which they are to be found.
6. Ecological information.
7. Adequate illustrations.

The intention is to publish Flora Zambesiaca in complete volumes or parts of volumes but not necessarily in strict chronological order in accordance with the BENTHAM & HOOKER system, adopted mainly for administrative convenience.

The first volume included various introductory features, the Gymnospermae and the Angiospermae from Ranunculaceae to Sterculiaceae inclusive. This was published in two parts, the first in 1960 and the second in 1961.

The second volume, Tiliaceae to Connaraceae was also published in two parts, in 1963 and 1966 respectively.

The first part of Volume 3, Leguminosae-Mimosoideae is now in the press and should appear very shortly.

Also in the press is a special volume, the Pteridophyta, which will not be in the numbered sequence.

Furthermore, the first part of the Gramineae is nearly complete and will be published much in advance of the systematic position of that family. We expect the Gramineae to be volume 10.

I do not propose to give a long list of the authors of the various families. The work has been done mainly by the Flora Zambesiaca staff and by the staff of the following institutions (in alphabetical order): British Museum of Natural History, Coimbra (Instituto Botânico), Kew (Royal Botanic Gardens); Lisbon (Centro de Botânica), Salisbury (Dept. of Agriculture). The Pteridophyta are by Dr. Schelpe of South Africa.

The two volumes already published contain approximately 283 genera and 1187 species and if our estimate is correct the total number of species of Flowering Plants in the flora should be about 6000 but the margin of error is considerable.

Finally, it will be obvious to all that political difficulties have delayed and hampered our work but it is a great satisfaction to my colleagues and myself that Flora Zambesiaca has been able to continue with the collaboration of all the countries concerned.